

Farm Bill Listening Forum – November 12, 2005 (Stacy Crivello, P O Box 1634, Kaunakakai, Hawaii 96748. email stacy@molokaiec.org, tel: 808.5538188)

Aloha – ~~Under Secretary~~ Dorr, Deputy ~~Under~~ Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Merlyn Carlson, Governor Lingle, Congressman Ed Case, _____

- Welcome to Hawaii and Thank you for afforded us the opportunity to comment on the Farm Bill. My name is Stacy Helm Crivello, I'm from the rural the island of Molokai. Our rural landscape is our island's asset – our population is approximately 7,400 and our island is 260 square miles in size. (we're so rural that traveling from Molokai to Kona is possible only by commuter airlines). I'm here today as board president of the Molokai Enterprise Community Governance Board. Our nonprofit entity is tasked with implementing Molokai's 10-year strategic plan that the USDA administers under the Rural Community Empowerment Program. Our island is the only federally designated Enterprise Community in the state of Hawaii. I would like to comment on questions 4 and 5. (#4: How can farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?) The Farm Bill policy affords the delivery of rural development programs.
- The Molokai EC in Partnership with federal, state and private collaboration, achieved conservation and environmental goals by protecting and enhancing high quality native Hawaiian rain forest communities with its East Watershed Project. The purpose of our Watershed partnership with TNC and private landowners for watershed preservation and restoration is critical to reviving the economy in a way that sustains the lifestyle & character of Molokai.
- Another conservation project that is part of the EC's strategic plan is the Northwest Erosion project. Soil erosion is a problem in the Northwest area of Molokai. Planting of native vegetation controls further erosion of coastal lands in and around the NW area.
- An opportunity for the residents of Molokai to reduce residential water heating costs with clean renewable solar power is made possible with a

96% of rural
income from
non-farm
USDA
investment

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- partnership with Maui Electric. Maui Electric Company received a USDA grant through its High Energy Cost Rural Communities to implement its Molokai Solar Program.

A Waste Water Management Improvement plan is underway as a Molokai EC project in partnership with the Maui County Economic Development Dept

(#5 How can Federal Rural and Farm programs provide effective assistance in rural areas?).

For our island, again, the delivery of Rural Development Programs provide effective assistance for economic opportunity, create a strategic vision for change with a holistic balance for sustainable community development and community based partnerships. Because of our EC designation, we were able to establish a Community Health Center with the influx of \$1.2M during its first year and in its 2nd year \$1.8M and job creation of 15 skilled staff and more important improved health care for the under insured and uninsured. The Enterprise Community have utilized EC Set Aside Funds and Community Facilities funding to construct a commercial kitchen, senior center, substance abuse intervention center, an independent middle school, and Housing Loan Funds-EC Set Aside Funds from the Single Family Housing Program. The EC designation has also provided leveraging of RBOG and RBEG funds, and Wildfire equipment for the Maui County Fire Dept. – Molokai District was leveraged through the 1st Responder Funds. Telemedicine grants were made possible for our island's health providers. Broadband and Enhance telecommunication needs are constantly evolving and the EC has a new project for training and education to develop a Community Technology & Telehealth Center. With the vision of controlling its own destiny and resources, The Molokai EC established a partnership with Molokai's largest landowner to develop a Master Land Use Plan that will enable the community to gain over

54,000 acres into Land Trust, Ag, Conservation and Open Space Easement and lands into a possible Community Development Corporation for the development of affordable homes and creation of economic investments by the redevelopment of the Kaluakoi Resort that was closed in the year 2000 and the loss of 120 jobs as a result of the resort's closing. An economic cluster of entrepreneurship, production based-value added products will downstream from the reopening.

The quality of life and economic vitality of Molokai and island communities depends on infrastructure, affordable homes, and opportunities for young families to find a reasonable job and to make possible for our young people to return home to forge their educated skills into their island home.

The EC/EZ program reverses the traditional federal process by empowering communities to develop their own strategic plan for economic revival. The Rural Development Field Office on Molokai is an important arm of the USDA program. We appreciate the supportive contact we receive from the Field Office - this is crucial to our community's sustainable efforts. As a volunteer grassroots organization, dealing with the federal government can be quite intimidating and for us an entry into an alien world.- A worthy investment of funds would be the availability of technical support for us to gain understanding and skills of utilizing the agency's programs.

As long as there are avenues, we will continue to work together as partners to ensure that we maintain the strength of our community and most importantly the quality of life we value. The Farm Bill Policy provides communities like Molokai to protect the footprints of our farmers and delivers Rural Development Programs for economic vitality, affordable homes, education and research.

